



Tributary Tribune

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 1

The mission of the AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project is to conserve, restore and enhance anadromous watersheds for future generations by linking education with high-quality scientific practices.

SUMMER 2008

"To talk too much and arrive nowhere is the same as climbing a tree to catch a fish"

-Chinese Proverb

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Do you know someone who likes science and is interested in working on streams and rivers?

The AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project (WSP) is currently accepting applications for Service Year 15! From February 2nd through December 11th, 2009, 44 members will serve with federal, state, county, tribal, and non-profit agencies and organizations in 14 communities throughout Northern California. Under the guidance of top natural resource professionals as mentors, members will conduct watershed and fisheries monitoring, hands-on restoration, environmental education, and community outreach.

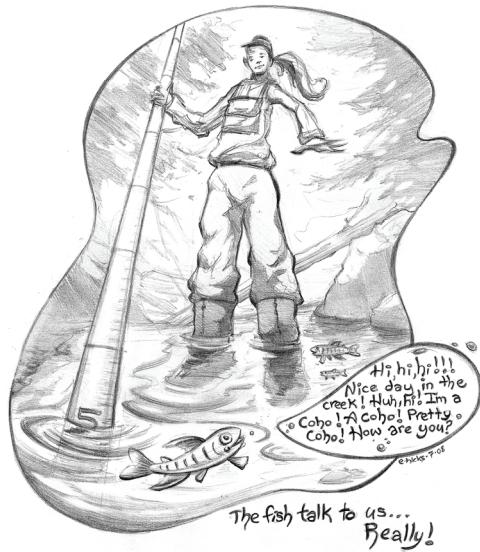
Three members will serve in a leadership capacity in the WSP office as Outreach, Education, and Volunteer/Media Team Leaders. Team Leaders play a key role in coordinating these important aspects of the program, as well as participate in planning member trainings, serve on regional coordination committees, website main-

nance, newsletter production, and more. Members will serve a minimum of 1,700 hours in 10.5 months and will receive a total stipend of \$13,600, an education award of \$4,725, no cost medical insurance, and a variety of training and professional development opportunities. Team Leaders will receive a total stipend of \$16,150.

To apply, please submit an AmeriCorps application and two reference forms (completed online at: <https://my.americorps.gov/mp/login.dn>), plus a cover letter and resume by September 19th. For more infor-

mation, please visit www.WatershedStewards.com or call (707) 725-8601.

Original Art by WSP member Erin Hicks



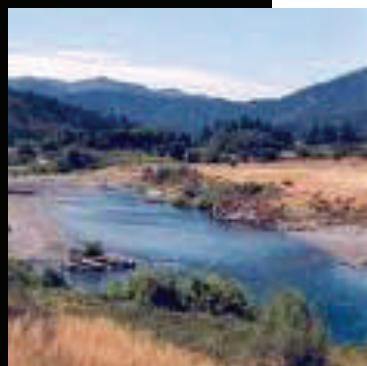
Creek Days 2008

By Brock Nedland

WSP and the Eel River Watershed Improvement Group (ERWIG) partnered to host a very successful 9th Annual Creek Days Environmental Education Fair at Pamplin Grove County Park in southern Humboldt County. Over 500 students, parents, and community members were educated about topics such as fluvial geomorphology, fisheries, aquatic insects, sustainability, alternative energy and more. Busses arrived every morning around 9am filled with children eager to learn about

their natural world and ready to spend a day in Mother Earth's classroom. Docents taught students about native botany and wildlife, played ecology centered games such as the Web of Life, and made sure that students were safely escorted to the educational booths. Students were also required to take a pre and post test to help event organizers determine the success of education presented. Some highlights of this year's event were smoothies made from a bike-powered blender, a discovery

table filled with many tangible specimens, and an alternative energy booth that demonstrated the ability for solar energy to propel a fan. WSP members went out of their way this year to create outstanding displays and presentations. Schools that participated in this event were full of positive feedback and gratitude toward WSP for making this opportunity possible.



**River near Hoopa,
CA**

"On its broadest level respect is the acknowledgment that someone has value. An Arapaho proverb states that, 'When we show our respect for other living things [including other humans], they respond with respect for us.'"



**Eye of a Chinook Salmon
(*Oncorhynchus tshawascha*)**

Just A Thought

by Sonja Kulstad-Hurst

A concern that for quite some time has been near and dear to my heart is the need to bridge the socio-political divide within our uniquely diverse communities. For whatever the reason, I tend to find myself playing the devil's advocate if for no reason other than to consider the driving forces behind opposing viewpoints. Maybe it is a curse, but no matter how devoted to whatever "cause", "belief", or "value" that I seem to affiliate myself with, I can't help but wonder "How the heck can 'THEY' think the way 'THEY' do?" And right when the "THEY's" and "THEM's" start to cloud my mind, I realize that I have succumbed to the judgment monster that I am so eager to deny having a place in my politically correct world. Recently I feel as if examples of the great chasm have been thrust before me as a lesson in intercultural communication, because after all, aren't our differences in values and beliefs nothing more than a result of cultural conditioning? Many of us have traveled far and wide, and would never dream of asking the unique and interesting cultures we encounter to abide strictly by our

values. Usually the very reason we travel is to actually broaden our scope of the world and come away with new perspectives. Often times if we are respectful and sensitive we are lucky enough to be invited to share our perspectives as well. I am by no means encouraging apathy or a lack of passion to create the changes we want to see in this world, but I am trying to be more thoughtful and respectful of those that challenge my beliefs. On its broadest level, respect is the acknowledgment that someone has value. An Arapaho proverb states that, "When we show our respect for other living things [including other humans], they respond with respect for us." Cultural and political differences will continue to be one of the dominant challenges for those of us who feel a strong commitment to our social and natural environments. It is up to us to be patient and forgiving, rather than hostile and aggressive, if conflicts arise. It appears that the most successful method of

instilling "our" ideals in the values of those who oppose us is through cooperation. Cooperation involves independent components that appear to be "selfish" working together in harmony. It is the alternative to working separately in competition. However, there tends to be a strong force that unites like-minded individuals to form a stronger competitive force. Wouldn't it be great if we took that energy of "preaching to the choir" to form stronger cooperative forces rather than competitive forces? Just a thought.



Do Fish See Color? Questions from the Kiddos:

By Sonja Kulstad-Hurst

As many anglers can tell you, the size, shape, and color of their lures can make a huge difference in the success of a day casting lines. Fish that see color are anatomically equipped with cones in their eyes which are critical for photo receptivity. Because there is such a vast array of fish species in a huge range of habitats it makes

sense to realize that not all fish have the same abilities to see color. Deep water fish, for example, have no use for color reception because they dwell in an environment where light does not penetrate, and as we all know, light is the critical component in making colors visible. Migrating fish such as salmon and shad have specialized cones that allow them to see greens when ocean dwelling and reds during spawning

times. Brightness also seems to be a critical factor in fish vision. The theory seems to be that cold sluggish fish tend to be more attracted to brightly colored lures, while warm fast moving fish are partial to more muted colors. Just another reason why fish are so amazing! (information from www.geocities.com).



Catchment

Anonymous

They are not to be measured in fathoms of limestone plundered by raindrops, the slumping of mineral and chemical slopes of repose, the shift of the oxbow as it loops on down-river,

but in faces forgotten and collateral still owing, betrayals and night sweats, poor choices, and the deception of birthdays.

They're measured in stratum repeated till broken, in harvest and top soil, nettles and crop marks, when the melted snows fill the ditch to overflowing. While cam-

bium phloem's the shackles of birthrights,

anything else means crossing the ridgeline making heads shake and beds rattle late in the night and you're still on a down-slope with rivers that don't taste of home.

They're measured in how far you've come from ground-ing and in how much it hurts you to know.

Carrie's Corner-WSP Director Speaks Out

by Carrie Gergits

Service Year 14 has been a year of positive program redesign and implementation!

I am pleased to say that year after year, WSP builds on both program design and administrative processes, making it easier for those involved to know what is going on as well as have the best experience possible.

This year, we have been working on the following :

Single Intake: This is the first year members have all started their term of service at the same time. I am pleased to say it seems to be working out really well for most everyone! We began the year with full enrollment and have had excellent retention so far!

New programs:

WSP Safety Committee: Meets monthly to discuss issues concerning staff and member safety.

Injury and Illness Prevention Plan: Part of this plan requires that members and mentors complete monthly safety logs. This program has been instrumental in providing comprehensive safety information to members so they can practice and learn about safety techniques throughout their term of service.

Greek Geeks: WSP's new volunteer program launched in May of 2008. This program has been extremely successful in recruiting volunteers to participate in hands-on watershed restoration efforts.

WSP Trainings: This year we began our biannual rotation of Spring and Summer training locations. Every other year we will rotate WSP trainings throughout different WSP regions. This rotation will provide

members who choose to serve a second year with WSP greater exposure to the work being done throughout the areas WSP serves and engage more placement sites in member trainings.

Monthly Member/Mentor Updates: Each month members and mentors receive updates which include safety tips, calendar updates, and general program information. This is our way of continually working on providing clear communication with so many people in different locations!

Handbooks: Roxanne Hart, business operations specialist, has/is currently helping us to redesign WSP's program handbooks:

Completed: Member and Mentor Handbooks have been re-formatted and updates have greatly improved accessibility and use of so much information!

In Process: Placement Site, Health and Safety, Fisheries, Education, and Outreach Handbooks to be completed by Year 15.

Upcoming News: We are planning a 15 Year WSP Reunion! WSP plans to coordinate the reunion in 2009 for all alums since 1994 to celebrate program longevity and promote networking amongst former WSP members. Further logistics

will be determined throughout the upcoming year and distributed to alums. If you are not yet registered on our website, please visit us at www.watershedstewards.com and click on the "alumni" tab to sign up!

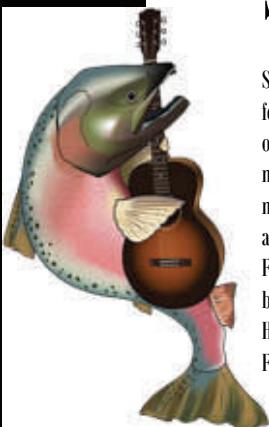
It is our hope that these improvements help everyone involved in WSP have the best experience possible.

In addition to work updates, on a personal note, I am pleased to announce that my husband and I are due with our first child in September. I will be out on maternity leave September and October, returning part-time in November. Lindsay will be the acting director while I am out.

Best wishes to everyone,

Carrie





"The idea of this event was to educate students (our watershed stewards of the future) and the public about the wonders of their watershed through games, activities, talks, tours, and panel discussions.."

Creek Geek Volunteers pull Himalayan Blackberry



SalmonAid

By Natalie Galatzer

SalmonAid 2008 was a success! The festival celebrating wild pacific salmon, organized by a collaboration of commercial, tribal, and recreational fishermen, conservation organizations, chefs, and scientists was jumpstarted on Friday, May 30th, with a wild salmon bake hosted by the Yurok, Karuk, and Hoopa Tribes at Ocean Beach in San Francisco. The salmon was fresh, caught

in the Lower Klamath just the day before. The festival itself spanned over the weekend of May 31st and June 1st in Oakland's Jack London Square with about 20 different organizations displaying their commitment to restoring wild runs of pacific salmon. About 7,000 community members joined us to learn about the plight of this amazing species, eat delicious sustainably caught or

harvested seafood, and enjoy rocking musicians like Les Claypool, front man of Primus. Many thanks go to the extremely hardworking AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project volunteers who traveled from as far as Somes Bar to help us put on the festival and were a crucial factor in making the festival run smoothly. Keep on the lookout for next year's festival! www.salmonaid.org

Fish Fair Fun

by Megan Allen

On Friday, June 6th, over a thousand students and teachers gathered at Hoopa Elementary School for the annual Klamath-Trinity Fish Fair. This is an environmental education event that hosted over 70 presenters from as far away as the Institute for Fisheries Resources in San Francisco and Whitman College in Washington, and as local as the Water Treatment Plant facility. The idea of this event was to educate

students (our watershed stewards of the future) and the public about the wonders of their watershed through games, activities, talks, tours, and panel discussions. These events began at 9 a.m. with a watershed rally in the high school gym, after which students rotated from one 35-minute session to another until 2 p.m. There was a panel discussion in the afternoon with some well-known scientists and local commu-

nity leaders. Many of these presentations were of local and personal relevance. Some of the sessions included: stories from local tribal elders, groundbreaking freshwater mussel research, a solar panel installation, a "face-to-face" with elephant seals, fish printing, and a chance to meet the fabulous and elusive Frank and Frances Fish. Overall the Fair was a roaring success!

Embrace Your Inner

Creek Geek!

By Melissa Scott

members who volunteer for five or more

Creek Geek Events receive a beautiful Creek Geeks T-shirt with a logo designed by WSP Member, Erin Hicks. So far this year we have had over 300 volunteers contribute over 1500 hours toward watershed restoration!



Downstream Migrant Fish Trapping

By Megan Allen



Juvenile salmonids begin their journey when they hatch out of their redds, button up their yolk sacs, and jump into the current to be swept downstream. If they happen to pass through the part of the current where a trap is set, they will be pulled into what looks (from a fishes' eye view) like a 5" diameter, half-submerged, slow-moving fan. This fan pulls them into a box, called a "live box", about 2.5' wide, deep, and long. Water is able to flow through the live box while the salmonids, debris and often times other "critters" remain inside the downstream migrant trap. Although the name conjures up images of a homeland security program for illegal fish, downstream migrant fish traps are actually a very useful and mostly harmless way of monitoring juvenile salmonid populations on their way through the rivers. It is critical that early each morning two to three people descend on the trap with gadgets, nets and buckets to collect data on the contents of the trap before setting the fish free to continue their downstream migration. The team

measure how fast the water is flowing, how fast the "fan" (or cone) of the trap is turning, and the water temperature and dissolved oxygen content in both the creek and the live box.

The numbers of fish go up and down every day, making (more or less) a bell curve. For a week or so in late April, over 1000 juvenile Chinook salmon came through our traps every day, most of them between 3 and 4 centimeters long. For a while before and after that peak week, we had around 400 every day, most between 4 and 5 centimeters long. Now that we're nearing the end of trapping season, it's closer to 100 a day, and the fish are anywhere from 4 to 9 centimeters long.

But we don't just see Chinook in our traps—juvenile steelhead trout, which have always been coming through our traps and sometimes munching on some of the smaller Chinook, recently began to outnumber them. It's nothing to be worried about—the Chi-

nook in our traps are bigger now and the steelhead are the tiny ones now. We see tons of speckled dace, two or three species of sculpin, the occasional eyeless and worm-like lamprey ammocete, and (my personal favorite) the gigantic Western Toad. But it's most exciting to all of us when we find an endangered coho among the crowds of Chinook and steelhead.

As everyone knows, times are tough for salmon these days. Their loss of habitat and decline in population are felt deeply by all the animals that depend on them, be they hungry carnivores, commercial fishermen, tribal subsistence fishers, or just your everyday lovers of lox. The data we collect in the traps helps make the connection between the numbers of fish coming out of the rivers, the numbers of fish caught in the ocean, and then to the numbers of fish coming back to spawn.

We get to spend our days on the trap getting to know these fascinating fish—looking them in the eyes, watching as they get bigger, and wishing them well on their way out to sea. If all goes well for them, we'll see them again in a few years, swimming upstream ragged and determined to fill the rivers once again with salmon. Good luck, Salmon!

"Although the name conjures up images of a homeland security program for illegal fish, downstream migrant fish traps are actually a very useful- and mostly harmless- way of monitoring juvenile salmonid populations on their way through the rivers."

Top Left: Example of a rotary screw trap.

Below : Coho caught at the Camp Creek (a tributary to the Klamath River) trap.



Watershed Stewards are a part of downstream migrant fish trap efforts in Happy Camp, Orleans, Yreka, Arcata, Petrolia, Hopland, Fort Bragg, and Forest Knolls.

Check us out at:
www.watershedstewards.com



AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project

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Students at S. Trinity High Share Their Thoughts on “A Day in the Field”



This day was interesting, learning about the different creatures in the river.

There were lots and lots of little bugs in the river today.

Rain is the skies way of crying. Try to recycle and preserve our forests and wa-

skitters.

Rain is cold, frogs are cool and teamwork is amazing.

Watershed, watershed.

Today I found a lot of bugs and frogs.

Mustangs are awesome. Today was wet and hard to find bugs.

ters. We depend on them, let's take care of them.

I miss George, Jeffry, Bert, Ernie, and Steve....my long lost friends, [frogs].

Rain really should go away and quit bringing down our parade.

I saw lots of bugs and frogs and li'l

I stood in the rain.

Rain was falling on the cheeks of all the happy students looking up in the sky for sun.

Today was interesting working in the river and doing activities with bugs.

It was another fun experience on the river bar.

Rain drops keep falling on my head....

I learned what those kind of bugs were called

I learned that there are so many frogs in the stream.

I really enjoyed the day, even though it was raining. I felt like a little kid again at the river, it was so fun!

This experience was quite fun. We found bugs and all sorts of stuff and found that the river was CLEAN.

This experience in science class was very interesting and educational because of the different things that I learned!

Heads Up:

Volunteer Appreciation event!

Save the date: October 18th 1:00-3:00pm

More information coming soon!

Check out our Volunteer Opportunities section at www.watershedstewards.com.

Winter 2008 Newsletter submissions needed!

Deadline for great stories, inspirational words of wisdom and WSP related photos is Oct. 31st. 2008.

5th Annual Pacific Northwest Wonders Amateur Photo Contest!

Deadline for submissions is October 15th. 2008. Remember, participation is closed to current WSP members, but we highly encourage contributions by WSP alumni, WSP mentors, community members and project supporters.

About Us:

AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project (WSP) is a community based watershed restoration program. The program places 44 members in 14 communities throughout 7 counties in Northern California from San Francisco to the Oregon border. Members come from across the US and are teamed-up with top natural resource professionals who serve as mentors to the members. WSP partners include a unique collaboration of private industry, academic institutions, nonprofit organizations and local, state, and federal agencies. WSP's focus is improving watershed health, including saving Chinook and coho salmon and steelhead trout from extinction. Currently Chinook, coho and steelhead are listed as threatened or

endangered under the State and Federal Endangered Species Act. A special project of the California Conservation Corps (CCC), WSP is administered by the California Volunteers and sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service. The data generated through WSP members' watershed monitoring, assessment, and analyses activities are the foundation of the CCC's on-the-ground fisheries and watershed restoration projects. WSP members also deliver science-based curriculum on watershed processes and salmonid life cycles to K-12 students in local schools.